

Amendments to the Claims: This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously Presented) A system for inoculating a biological chamber configured to contain influent and biomass to degrade contaminants in the influent, said system comprising:

a vessel configured to receive influent and biomass from the chamber and to substantially isolate the received influent and biomass from that contained in the chamber;

said vessel also being configured to deliver the isolated influent and biomass to the chamber, thereby facilitating inoculation of the chamber, wherein at least a portion of said vessel is positioned within the chamber.

2. (Original) The system recited in claim 1, wherein the capacity of said vessel is less than that of the chamber.

3. (Original) The system recited in claim 2, wherein the capacity of said vessel is less than or equal to about 50% of that of the chamber.

4. (Original) The system recited in claim 1, further comprising a valve assembly coupled to selectively permit the flow of influent and biomass between said vessel and the chamber.

5. (Original) The system recited in claim 4, wherein said valve assembly is configured for manual operation.

6. (Original) The system recited in claim 4, wherein said valve assembly is configured for automatic operation.

7. (Original) The system recited in claim 1, further comprising a pump to urge influent and biomass from said vessel to the interior of the chamber.

8. (Original) The system recited in claim 1, said system being configured to transport influent and biomass between said vessel and said chamber by gravity forces.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Original) The system recited in claim 1, wherein said vessel is substantially cylindrical in shape.

11. (Original) The system recited in claim 1, wherein a top portion of said vessel extends above the level of the influent and biomass in the chamber.

12. (Original) The system recited in claim 1, wherein said vessel defines an open top.

13. (Original) The system recited in claim 1, said vessel further comprising an influent and biomass drain.

14. (Original) The system recited in claim 1, further comprising an influent and biomass drain connected to the chamber.

15. (Original) The system recited in claim 1, said system being adapted to maintain the isolated influent and biomass at substantially the same temperature as in the chamber.

16. (Currently Amended) A system for inoculating a biological chamber configured to contain influent and biomass to degrade contaminants in the influent, said system comprising:

means for substantially isolating influent and biomass received from the chamber from influent and biomass contained in the chamber; and

means for delivering isolated influent and biomass to the chamber, thereby facilitating inoculation of the chamber, wherein at least a portion of said vessel isolating means is positioned within the chamber.

17. (Original) The system recited in claim 16, further comprising means for controlling the flow of isolated influent and biomass to the chamber.

18. (Original) The system recited in claim 16, further comprising means for urging isolated influent and biomass to the chamber.

19. (Original) The system recited in claim 16, said system being adapted to maintain isolated influent and biomass at substantially the same temperature as in the chamber.

20. (Currently Amended) A method for inoculating a biological reactor having a chamber adapted to contain influent and biomass to degrade contaminants in the influent, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) substantially isolating, in a vessel, a portion of influent and biomass received from the chamber from influent and biomass in the chamber; and

(b) delivering at least a portion of the isolated influent and biomass to the chamber, thereby inoculating the chamber, wherein at least a portion of saidthe vessel is positioned within the chamber.

21. (Previously Presented) The method recited in claim 20, further comprising the step of maintaining the isolated influent and biomass in the vessel at substantially the same temperature as in the chamber.

22. (Original) The method recited in claim 20, further comprising the step of detecting a reduction in biological activity in the chamber.

23. (Previously Presented) The method recited in claim 20, further comprising the step of isolating in the vessel another portion of influent and biomass received from the chamber, thereby replenishing isolated influent and biomass delivered to the chamber.

24. (Original) The method recited in claim 20, wherein said isolating step is performed periodically.

25. (Previously Presented) The method recited in claim 20, further comprising discharging isolated influent and biomass from the vessel.

26. (Previously Presented) The method recited in claim 20, further comprising maintaining isolated influent and biomass in the vessel under substantially the same conditions as in the chamber.

27. (Original) The method recited in claim 20, further comprising discharging at least a portion of influent and biomass from the chamber before said delivering step.

28. (Original) The method recited in claim 20, further comprising substantially emptying the chamber and re-introducing influent and biomass into the chamber before said delivering step.

29. (Currently Amended) A method for configuring a biological reactor for inoculation, wherein the biological reactor includes a chamber adapted to contain influent and biomass to degrade contaminants in the influent, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) configuring a vessel to receive influent and biomass from the chamber;

(b) configuring the vessel to substantially isolate received influent and biomass from that in the chamber; and

(c) configuring the vessel to return at least a portion of the isolated influent and biomass to the chamber, wherein at least a portion of saidthe vessel is positioned within the chamber.

30. (Cancelled)

31. (Original) The method recited in claim 29, further comprising configuring the vessel to maintain isolated influent and biomass under substantially the same conditions as in the chamber.

32. (Currently Amended) A biological reactor comprising:

a chamber configured to contain influent and biomass to degrade contaminants in the influent;

a vessel configured to substantially isolate influent and biomass from that contained in said chamber, said vessel being configured to receive influent and biomass

from said chamber, and said vessel also being configured to deliver isolated influent and biomass to said chamber, wherein at least a portion of said vessel is positioned within thesaid chamber, thereby facilitating inoculation of the biological reactor.

33. (Original) The biological reactor recited in claim 32, wherein said vessel comprises an inlet positioned to receive influent and biomass from said chamber.

34. (Original) The biological reactor recited in claim 33, wherein said inlet is formed by a port in said vessel.

35. (Original) The biological reactor recited in claim 32, wherein said vessel comprises an outlet positioned to deliver isolated influent and biomass to said chamber.

36. (Original) The biological reactor recited in claim 35, wherein said outlet is formed by a port in said vessel.

37. (Previously Presented) A method for providing inoculum for a biological reactor having a chamber adapted to contain influent and biomass to degrade contaminants in the influent, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) substantially isolating a portion of remaining influent and biomass within the chamber from influent and biomass in the chamber; and

(b) maintaining the isolated influent and biomass at substantially the same temperature as the remaining influent and biomass in the chamber.

38. (Original) The method recited in claim 37, further comprising discharging isolated influent and biomass.

39. (Original) The method recited in claim 38, further comprising isolating an additional portion of influent and biomass, thereby replenishing discharged influent and biomass.

40. (Original) The method recited in claim 37, said isolating step comprising delivering influent and biomass from the chamber into a vessel.

41. (Original) The method recited in claim 40, said maintaining step comprising maintaining the vessel at least partially within the chamber.